

Executive Office,  
May, 14, 1897.

To the Senate:

Senate bill No. 263, being an act to lease to H. P. N. Gammel the stereotyped plates of Volumes 72 to 86 inclusive of the Supreme Court Reports, is herewith returned without approval. These reports were printed by the State at a probable average cost of two thousand dollars per volume, aggregating \$30,000 for the fifteen volumes, exclusive of the salaries paid to the reporters and judges. In part consideration, and pursuant to contract, the publishers, after each volume was finished, delivered to the State the stereotyped plates, and from these plates other books can be printed without further expense than paper, ink and presswork. The actual value of the plates can not be stated, but considering the cost of the volumes already mentioned, less the sum realized by the State from the sale of a number of books of each volume, and having reference to the present cost of making the plates, it is safe to put this value at not less than \$10,000. The bill proposes to deliver the plates and allow the beneficiary to print and sell the reports without payment to the State of a dollar. The lease extends for five years, and as the plates will be exhausted in that time, it is tantamount to a donation of them and the creation of a monopoly in the books after the expiration of the lease. The only assumption of benefit to the State government in the bill is that while during the lease the books may be sold to the general public at two dollars per volume the State may purchase them at one dollar and twenty-five cents. It is apparent, however, that as the State supplies in the plates the entire cost of composition, this price is high. On books sold to the State, the profit will be fifty-five cents per book, and on those sold to the general public one dollar and thirty cents per book. The profit which the State may derive from purchasing at one dollar and twenty-five cents and selling at two dollars, in competition and rivalry with the lessee is manifestly inconsiderable. The convenience of the bar in securing the reports at the profit named, the only public good that will be subserved by the bill, is thus obtained at a heavy public sacrifice and can be obtained more justly to the State by authorizing the Printing Board to contract for the work with the lowest responsible bidder, so that

some of the money paid out for the plates may be returned.

C. A. CULBERSON.